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ABSTRACT

The paper examines issues for consideration by students with special needs who are interested in postsecondary education. Information is provided in the form of answers to frequently asked questions including: where should a student begin in making plans for postsecondary education? what kinds of general concerns should a student consider in making a decision about postsecondary programs? are students with special needs required to take standard admission tests? how do I find more information about specialized testing for the American College Testing program and the Scholastic Aptitude Test? (addresses are given); once a school or college has been selected, what offices should be contacted? what kinds of special needs services do schools and colleges offer? are there directories and books available which discuss selecting a program and which offer advice on financial aid and special services? and is it important to make a personal visit to a school or college before deciding to attend? Sixteen resources are listed with brief abstracts and source addresses. (DB)

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TITLE: POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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ABSTRACT: *This module offers information for students with special needs interested in postsecondary education.*

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Overview

Given the industrial and technological developments of the past decade, pursuing education beyond high school is an option which will continue to become more significant for all students. Additional education can help build stronger occupational qualifications and more definite career goals. More and more students with special needs are pursuing postsecondary education, and as a result many universities, colleges and vocational schools have developed a full range of support services in order to attract and serve students with special needs. This module provides an examination of some of the issues which these students should consider in their educational plans. Also, information resources which should be consulted are listed.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. WHERE SHOULD A STUDENT BEGIN IN MAKING PLANS FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION?

A. The student should have a clear understanding of his/her occupational interests and abilities. Many times it is appropriate for students with special needs to undergo a full vocational assessment. This should be considered in relation to the entry level as well as later expectations of the skill and knowledge requirements for a given vocational or college program. Finally, the student should consider the kinds of career fields which will need employees in the future. These issues should be discussed with his/her high school counselor, teachers and parents.

Q. WHAT KINDS OF GENERAL CONCERNS SHOULD A STUDENT CONSIDER IN MAKING A DECISION ABOUT POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS?

A. The first issue is to decide what type of program the student wants. There are a wide variety of public and private professional schools, vocational schools, two-year colleges, four-year colleges and universities. Career interests and the student's level of preparation for additional education should be carefully considered. How qualified is the students for advanced work? What remedial steps should be taken prior to applying for a program? What kinds of special services will the student need during his/her advanced education? Does the school or college of interest to the student offer these services? Will financial aid be important?

Q. ARE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS REQUIRED TO TAKE STANDARD ADMISSION TEST(S)?

A. Most colleges and universities along with some vocational schools require applicants to take a standardized test such as the ACT or SAT. In order to accommodate students with special needs some of these institutions will permit specialized testing and/or have separate policies regarding this issue. It is recommended to check with

the institutions of the student's interest and ascertain their individual policies and/or procedures. If the ACT or SAT is required, the student should take the test both their junior year (second semester) and senior year. By doing this the student has an opportunity to improve their scores. Also it is imperative to adequately prepare the student for such testing such as giving reviews, providing study guides and/or administering practice tests.

Q. HOW DO I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIALIZED TESTING FOR THE ACT AND SAT?

A. More information about specialized ACT testing can be obtained by contacting:

Special Testing--58
ACT Test Administration
P.O. Box 168
Iowa City, IA 52243
(319) 337-1332.

More information about specialized SAT testing can be obtained by contacting:

Educational Testing Services
Services for Handicapped Students
CN 6602
Princeton, NJ 08541-6602
(609) 921-9000.

Q. ONCE A SCHOOL OR COLLEGE HAS BEEN SELECTED, WHAT OFFICES SHOULD BE CONTACTED?

A. The office of admissions will send application forms and catalogs on request. The financial aid office will send information about eligibility for assistance and the availability of funds. Admission applications and financial aid request forms can be lengthy and complicated. Counselors, teachers, and parents should work closely with the student to complete them. It is advisable to apply early in the academic year.

Q. WHAT KINDS OF SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES DO SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OFFER?

A. The main types of services are academic support and independent living. Academic support services would include special needs counselors and advisors, barrier-free and accessible campus facilities, note-taking and lecture taping services, computer technology services, tutors, exam modifications and library assistance. A student should know exactly what special academic support services will be needed, and determine if a school or college offers them.

Services for independent living would include a barrier-free and accessible environment, personal aides and attendants, living quarters and meals, laundry and transportation, social organizations, church groups and services, and leisure/recreation activities. Knowing the special services needed and whether the school or college offers these services, will ensure that the student will be able to live a full and satisfying social life.

Q. ARE THERE DIRECTORIES AND BOOKS AVAILABLE WHICH DISCUSS SELECTING A PROGRAM, AND WHICH OFFER ADVICE ON FINANCIAL AID AND SPECIAL SERVICES?

A. Yes, a wide range of materials are available which cover every aspect of these problems. Please take note of the works which are briefly summarized in the resource list of this module. Some of these materials are available free of charge and will be sent on request. Consult with counselors to determine if a selection of these materials are available at the high school.

The number of special students who are seeking postsecondary education is increasing each year. Consequently more schools and colleges are offering services to meet their special academic and independent living needs. As a result of these developments, most general directories of schools and colleges now offer some information on special services. Also, there are guides and directories which list only those colleges and schools offering programs with services for students with special needs. Some of these materials are free of charge and available on request. Please note the lists and directories in the resources section of this module.

Q. IS IT IMPORTANT TO MAKE A PERSONAL VISIT TO A SCHOOL OR COLLEGE BEFORE DECIDING TO ATTEND?

A. An on-site visit will provide an opportunity for the student to meet with the admissions officer, academic counselors, representatives from the area of the student's interest, special support services staff, and financial aid counselors. Meetings can be arranged with students who are already enrolled in the program. They can offer invaluable information about the reliability and quality of the academic special needs and independent living services which are available.

Resources

HEATH Resource Center
One Dupont Circle, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036-1193
(800) 544-3284
(202) 939-9320
Both lines are Voice/TDD

HEATH is an acronym for Higher Education and Adult Training for people with Handicaps. It is a public organization which is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. HEATH is a clearinghouse for information on postsecondary education for handicapped persons. It has the most up-to-date information on every level of postsecondary education including professional school, vocational schools, two-year colleges, four-year colleges and universities. HEATH disseminates information on postsecondary education free of charge both through its 800 number and its many helpful publications. Also, most of its publications are free of charge. A list of their publications will be sent to you on request. Several of their free publications are described here.

HEATH Resource Directory

This directory is updated and published each year. It is a directory of directories and contains a comprehensive list of professional, educational and special needs advocacy organizations which are directly concerned with postsecondary education for handicapped students. This list covers organizations which are concerned with every type of handicap. Information resources cover such subjects as architectural access, family support, funding, postsecondary education planning and school selection process, technology, and legal assistance. The directory also contains a list of HEATH publications.

Information from HEATH

This is the HEATH newsletter which is published three times each year. It reports any new developments in postsecondary special needs education. Topics which are covered include changes in legislation which affect postsecondary education, developments in financial aid and scholarships, descriptions of newly developed programs in schools and colleges, and a description of new organizations, programs or publications.

Young Adults with Learning Disabilities and Other Special Needs: Guide for Selecting Postsecondary Transition Programs

This resource paper offers information on training and education programs for those students who do not wish to enter traditional programs or employment immediately after high school. Different sections of the paper are devoted to information for parents, advisers, counselors, transition specialists and program directors. A list of programs for employment and funding is also included.

Financial Aid for Students with Disabilities
This paper considers all aspects of financial aid. It discusses expenses, family contribution and financial need to be met by an aid package. Various sources of aid are listed and explained. The assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation and financial aid offices is described. The paper includes a detailed description of scholarship sources. This paper is updated through articles in the newsletter, Information from HEATH.

Education for Employment: A Guide to Postsecondary Vocational Education for Students with Disabilities
This paper covers the legislative basis and funding of vocational education, the types of institutions and programs in vocational education, sources of career information, components of vocational programs, and job development and placement information.

How to Choose a College: Guide for the Student with a Disability
This HEATH resource paper covers all aspects of selecting a college. It discusses the factors which should guide your decision, and considers special services, admission procedures, the problems of financial aid, and advice on evaluating college programs for students with special needs.

Council for Noncollegiate Continuing Education
530 East Main Street, Suite 501
Richmond, VA 23219
Price: $3.00
Directory of Accredited Noncollege Continuing Education Programs
This directory is updated and published each year. It contains information on over 600 different types of programs including accounting, cosmetology, photography, banking, blue print reading, drafting, word processing, electronics, and paraprofessional fields such as in law and medicine. These are non-degree programs and they vary in course length from 2 months to a year.

National Home Study Council
1601 18th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
Price: Free
Directory of Accredited Home Study Schools
This directory is updated and published each year. It lists 104 different schools which offer correspondence courses. In most cases all of the work can be done at home, lessons are sent by mail. Some courses lead to two-year and four-year degrees. Fields covered are travel and tourism services, motel management, food service, secretarial and bookkeeping, medical and dental office assistant, piano tuning and repair, electronics, computers, and paraprofessional courses in law and medicine.

Adler & Adler Publishers, Inc.
4550 Montgomery Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20814
Price: $12.97
Unlocking Potential: College and Other Choices for Learning Disabled People--A Step-by-Step Guide. Scheiber, B., & Talpera, J. (1987)
This is an excellent handbook on postsecondary education, and while it is written especially for those with learning disabilities, most of the information it offers applies to all types of disabilities. Covers a full range of topics including selecting a college or school, evaluating and making the best use of special services both academic and for independent living, tips on selecting courses and general study skills, and offers a list of organizations which offer more information.

Peterson's Guides
Department 5710
166 Bunn Drive, Box 2123
Princeton, NJ 08450-0008
Price: $19.95
Peterson's Guide to Colleges with Programs for L.D. Students. Mangrum, c., & Strichart, S., (1988).
This is a directory of both two-year and four-year college programs. Comprehensive programs are those which have been designed especially for L.D. students. Programs which are useful for L.D. students but which were designed for a broader range of disabilities are classified as programs with special services. Over 900 colleges are listed nationwide.

Academic Press
6277 Sea Harbor Lane
Orlando, FL 32821
Price: $32.50, each volume
A Guide to Colleges for Hearing Impaired Students. Lisco, M. (1987).
A Guide to Colleges for Learning Disabled Students. Lisco, M. (1987).
A Guide to Colleges for Mobility Impaired Students. Lisco, M. (1987).
A Guide to Colleges for Visually Impaired Students. Lisco, M. (1987).
This set of college directories covers both two-year and four-year colleges which offer special services and programs for the types of disabilities indicated. These directories are unique in terms of the range of disabilities which are covered.

Instructional Materials Laboratory
University of Missouri-Columbia
2316 Industrial Drive
Columbia, MO 65202
Price: $14.20 (in Missouri), $16.70 (out-of-state)
Guide to Missouri Postsecondary Programs Offering Special Services. Timmons, T. (1986).
This guide reviews services offered by Missouri's Area Vocational Technical Schools, two-year and four-year colleges. It is the only guide available which covers exclusively the programs in Missouri.